

**Statement by Edward J. Markey (D-MA)**  
**December 4, 2001**  
**A TRIBUTE TO MAUREEN REAGAN**

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of HJ Res 60 and to pay tribute to Maureen Reagan, a personal friend, an extraordinary woman, a talented spokesperson and a tireless advocate for those suffering from Alzheimer's disease. On August 8th, Maureen passed away after waging a courageous five-year battle with cancer. With her passing, this country lost a true leader in the fight against Alzheimer's disease.

As a member of the Alzheimer's Association's national board of directors, Maureen worked diligently with Members of Congress to increase funding for Alzheimer's research. She provided compelling testimony before Congress warning that Alzheimer's was on the road to becoming the epidemic of the 21st century unless science could find a way to prevent millions of babyboomers from getting the disease. Just prior to her untimely death, she had been calling on Congress to double funding for Alzheimer research at the National Institutes of Health to \$1 billion by 2003. As co-chair of the Congressional Task Force on Alzheimer's Disease, I always valued Maureen's sage advice on Task Force goals and legislative initiatives.

I remember one occasion, in March 2000, when Maureen came to Washington to lobby Congress for increased Alzheimer research funding. In between a busy schedule of press interviews and visits with Congressional leaders, she spent several hours meeting with several members of the Alzheimer's Task Force. In that meeting, Maureen expertly outlined the research breakthroughs of the 1990's and reiterated that scientists were in a race against time to find the answers to Alzheimer's disease.

With grace, warmth and delightful wit, Maureen convinced lawmakers to pay attention to the scourge plaguing one in ten Americans over sixty-five and half of seniors over the age of 85. She took the tragedy of her own father's illness and chose to fight not only for him but also for the four million Americans who currently have Alzheimer's disease. Mr. Speaker, it takes tremendous courage to take on Alzheimer's disease in such a public way while a parent at home is deteriorating from that same illness. Maureen knew that there was no time to waste so she took on the challenge despite a heavy emotional burden. Even as her own health declined, she refused to let up in her advocacy role, continuing her fight for more federal research dollars from her hospital bed and later while recovering from cancer treatments at home in California.

Mr. Speaker, I can think of no better way to pay tribute to Maureen's legacy than to continue the fight to create a world without Alzheimer's disease. Although we have lost her voice, Maureen's passion and energy live on and continue to inspire us as we work to improve the quality of life for those affected by Alzheimer's disease.

I am deeply saddened by the loss of Maureen and miss her dearly. My thoughts and prayers are with her husband Dennis, her daughter Rita and the entire Reagan family.

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